

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13
SSM-03 OMB-01 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 HA-05 /102 W
-----117477 111527Z/44

O 111448Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4078
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 01065

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR PBOR EG IS XF US
SUBJECT: SETTLEMENTS ISSUE CLOUDS ATMOSPHERE ON EVE NEW
- ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS

REF: CAIRO 00918

SUMMARY: SETTLEMENTS ISSUE LOOMS LARGE AS BILATERAL
MILITARY COMMITTEE MEETING OPENS LATER TODAY AND PREPARA-
TIONS CONTINUE FOR POLITICAL COMMITTEE
MEETING IN JERUSALEM. MEDIA STRESSING EGYPT WILL REQUIRE
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WITHDRAWAL OF ALL SETTLEMENTS ALTHOUGH SADAT CONTINUING
AVOID PUBLIC DEBATE WITH BEGIN. EGYPTIANS, INCLUDING
MEMBERS NEGOTIATING TEAM, INCREASINGLY FEARFUL THAT WILL
FOR SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS DOES NOT EXIST ON ISRAELI
SIDE TO SAME EXTENT AS EGYPTIAN SIDE. THEY BELIEVE
BEGIN STRONG ENOUGH TO GO CONSIDERABLY FURTHER FASTER
AND SUSPECT HE PLAYING FOR TIME IN ORDER ACHIEVE SEPARATE

PEACE AND KEEP THE WEST BANK. U.S. ROLE SEEN AS CRUCIAL IN RESOLVING SETTLEMENTS ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

1. MILITARY COMMITTEE. BILATERAL MILITARY COMMITTEE . TO BEGIN ITS WORK AT 1800 MONDAY, JANUARY 11. PRESS PRO- CLAIMS "DISMANTLING ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS FIRST ITEM ON AGENDA" AND ALL ASPECTS OF WITHDRAWAL TO BE DISCUSSED. EACH SIDE HAS ITS OWN PLAN FOR WITHDRAWAL, PRESS NOTES, AND EGYPT'S INCLUDES EARLY WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL OF SINAI, AND ELIMINATION OF ALL MILITARY AND CIVILIAN INSTALLATIONS. ISRAELI NEGOTIATING TEAM, PRECEDED BY 25 TECHNICIANS WHO ARRIVED JANUARY 10, EXPECTED AT 1100 ALONG WITH SOME 50 ISRAELI JOURNALISTS. MAJ. GEN. HASSAN AHMED ELKATEB DESIGNATED SPOKESMAN FOR EGYPTIAN SIDE AND WILL MEET WITH PRESS AFTER EACH DAY'S SESSION.

2. POLITICAL COMMITTEE. PREPARATIONS CONTINUING FOR OPENING JANUARY 15 (SIC) OF POLITICAL COMMITTEE IN JERUSALEM. AGENDA, PRESS REPORTS REITERATE, CONSISTS OF TOTAL WITHDRAWAL, PALESTINIAN QUESTION ("WHICH INCLUDES SELF-DETERMINATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF INDEPENDENT STATE") AND PEACE ARRANGEMENTS AFTER WITHDRAWAL. ALL PAPERS FEATURED MEETING BETWEEN FORMIN KAMEL AND AMBASSADOR EILTS JANUARY 10 ON PREPARATIONS FOR JERUSALEM. SADAT HELD "EXTREMELY IMPORTANT" MEETING WITH MUBARAK AND SALIM TO ISSUE DIRECTIVES IN LIGHT OF HIS RECENT INTERNATIONAL

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CONTACTS. DAYAN QUOTED PROMINENTLY THAT HE EXPECTS TALKS TO LAST TWO MONTHS.

3. SETTLEMENTS. SETTLEMENTS QUESTION HAS BECOME MAJOR EGYPTIAN PREOCCUPATION. IN PRESS CONFERENCE WITH SHAH, SADAT SAID HE DID NOT WISH TO ENGAGE IN VERBAL BATTLE ON SETTLEMENTS ISSUE BUT BELIEVED ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS POLICY INCOMPATIBLE WITH PEACE EFFORTS. PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE MET URGENTLY JANUARY 10 AND ISSUED STATEMENT THAT EXECUTION ISRAELI SETTLEMENT POLICY "AT THIS DELICATE STAGE, BOUND TO CREATE HARMFUL SITUATION, OBSTRUCT PROGRESS OF TALKS AND THREATEN EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH PEACE." STRESSED NECESSITY OF ELIMINATING ALL SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. EDITORIAL COMMENT UNIFORMLY CALLED ON ISRAEL TO RISE TO OCCASION BY RESPONDING SUITABLY TO SADAT'S INITIATIVES, CLAIMED EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY IN SINAI UNQUESTIONABLE, AND BLAMED ISRAEL FOR PLACING OBSTACLES IN ROAD TO PEACE. CAIRO RADIO BROADCAST JANUARY 10 SUMMED UP EGYPTIAN VIEWS ON SETTLEMENTS BY STATING EGYPTIAN POSITION "TOTALLY BASED ON INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMACY, UN RESOLUTIONS, AND RECOGNIZED PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW." AND "IT IS

GREAT MISTAKE FOR ISRAELI OFFICIALS TO IMAGINE THAT
EGYPTIAN PEOPLE CAN POSSIBLY ACCEPT A SETTLEMENT WHICH
WOULD UNDERMINE EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY IN ANY WAY . . . AS
WORLD KNOWS VERY WELL, EGYPT HAS DONE FOR SAKE OF JUST
PEACE LAST THING ANY STATE CAN DO. THERE IS NOTHING
ELSE EGYPT CAN GIVE FOR ACHIEVEMENT OF PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.
THE SITUATION, IN THE END, DEPENDS ON ISRAEL AND THE

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DEGREE OF ITS REAL DESIRE AND SINCERITY OF ITS INTENTIONS."

4. U.S. VIEW. HODDING CARTER REPORTED AS SAYING U.S. IN
PAST HAS DESCRIBED ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS AS ILLEGAL AND
OBSTACLES TO PEACE. QUOTED THAT U.S. HAS NOT BACKED OFF
ITS POSITION ON SETTLEMENTS AND U.S. BELIEVES ISSUE CAN
BE SOLVED THROUGH EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DISCUSSIONS. ACCORD-
ING "OBSERVERS", THERE NOW INDICATIONS U.S. PREPARING
TAKE TOUGH STAND AT JERUSALEM AND DIFFERENCES WITH ISRAEL

EXPECTED BECOME VISIBLE.

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5. SELF-DETERMINATION. PALESTINIAN QUESTION ALSO TREATED PROMINENTLY. AHRAM REPORTED FROM WASHINGTON "DEPARTMENT CIRCLES" SAY SECRETARY VANCE WILL CONCENTRATE AT JERUSALEM ON FORMULA FOR SELF-DETERMINATION ACCEPTABLE TO ALL. DEPARTMENT LEGAL EXPERTS, ACCORDING AHRAM, HAVE ALREADY DRAFTED SUCH FORMULA AND VANCE WILL DISCUSS IT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND BRZEZINSKI BEFORE LEAVING FOR JERUSALEM.

6. COMMENT. SETTLEMENTS ISSUE IS CAUSING CONCERN AND APPREHENSION EVEN AMONG MEMBERS EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATING TEAM. WHILE THEY STILL HOLDING TO THEORY THAT IRREVERSIBLE DIALOGUE UNDERWAY, THEY ARE INCREASINGLY FEARFUL THAT GOOD FAITH AND REAL DESIRE FOR SUCCESS DO NOT EXIST ON ISRAELI SIDE. WHILE A FEW RECOGNIZE THAT SUNDAY'S CABINET DECISION ALSO WAS PUT-DOWN OF SHARON'S MORE AMBITIOUS PLANS, THEY BELIEVE BEGIN IS STRONG ENOUGH TO GO CONSIDERABLY FURTHER FASTER. THEY SUSPECT, THEREFORE, THAT HE IS NOT USING TIME TO BRING ABOUT TRANSFORMATION IN ISRAELI THINKING, BUT RATHER PLAYING FOR TIME IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A SEPARATE PEACE AND KEEP THE WEST BANK.

7. U.S. ROLE. EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS PROFESS TO SEE ISRAELI SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY AS OUTRIGHT DEFIANCE OF U.S. THEY ARGUE U.S. MUST NOW BACK UP ITS PUBLICLY STATED POSITION THAT SETTLEMENTS ILLEGAL AND OBSTACLE TO PEACE WITH CONCRETE ACTIONS OR PEACE PROCESS WILL FAIL. IN SHORT, SETTLEMENTS ISSUE NOW SEEN HERE AS YARDSTICK OF ISRAELI INTENTIONS AND ACID TEST OF U.S. CREDIBILITY. EILTS

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Message Attributes

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